

NEWS RELEASE

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

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For Immediate Release

October 21, 2004

Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that on October 19, 2004, **BRETT BESS**, age 33, of Ava, Illinois, was sentenced in United States District Court in Benton, Illinois. BESS, who had previously pled guilty to a one-count indictment charging him with conspiracy to manufacture methamphetamine, was sentenced to 121 months' imprisonment, 5 years supervised release, and was fined \$350.

The investigation established that from at least June 2002, through March 23, 2003, BESS was involved with others in the manufacture, distribution, and use of methamphetamine in Jackson County, Illinois. The investigation was conducted by the Jackson County Sheriff's Office, Perry County Sheriff's Office, Murphysboro Police Department, Illinois State Police, and Drug Enforcement Administration pursuant to their participation in the Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative. The goal of the Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative is to remove illegal guns and drugs from our communities. Under the Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative, federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecutors are working together to prosecute drug dealers, felons in possession of firearms, and criminals that use firearms to commit violent offenses or drug trafficking offenses in the system that will get them the most time.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Amanda A. Robertson.